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BEFORE THE  
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20268

2011 DEC 14 P 2:09

In the Matter of:

Venice, CA 90291  
Post Office State ZIP Code

POSTAL REGULATORY  
COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Docket No: A2012-17

Greta Cobar, Petitioner(s)

## PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

1. Petitioner(s) are appealing the Postal Service's Final Determination concerning the Venice post office. The Final Determination was posted \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

2. In accordance with applicable law, 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(5), the Petitioner(s) request the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the Postal Service's determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of the determination.

3. Petitioners: Please set out below the reasons why you believe the Postal Service's Final Determination should be reversed and returned to the Postal Service for further consideration. (See pages of the Instructions for an outline of the kinds of reasons the law requires us to consider.) Please be as specific as possible. Please continue on additional paper if you need more space and attach the additional page(s) to this form.

See attachment

Petitioner Greta Cobar, an individual residing in Venice, California and served by the Venice, California Main Post Office (VMPO) hereby petitions the Postal Regulatory Commission for review of the September 23, 2011, decision by the United States Postal Service (USPS) to close the historic structure presently housing the VMPO at 1601 Main Street made by way of the Final Decision Regarding Relocation of Retail Services in Venice, California dated September 23, 2011, and signed by David E. Williams, Vice President of Network Operations for the USPS.

The petition is made on the ground that the Closure Decision improperly describes the closure as a "relocation" of a customer service facility to another existing building, namely, the Venice Carrier Annex at 313 Grand Boulevard, when in fact it would result in the elimination of a large retail post office with five customer windows and the establishment in its place of a much smaller retail operation with no more than two customer windows, ancillary to the Venice Carrier Annex. This dramatic decrease in the size of the VMPO simultaneous with its purported "relocation" means that in fact, the action is the functional equivalent of a closure – or at least a partial closure – of the VMPO. Thus, the decision should be, and is, subject to all procedures and considerations associated with a closure.

Currently customer wait time in the VMPO, with more than two windows open, usually exceeds 20 minutes. A decrease in the number of windows available for customer service will further increase wait time, which will result in service not meeting the standards of the USPS.

Other issues with closing the VMPO involve preservation of the 1939 Works Projects Administration building and the 1942 Edward Biberman mural. Two other Biberman murals that were removed from the downtown post office and court house were never to be found again when Biberman himself searched for them in the mid 1980s. In addition, the mural has to be available for public viewing, which would be difficult to ensure once the building is sold.

In addition, the residential area surrounding the annex, the proposed new location of the post office, cannot accommodate the increased traffic that moving the post office would create. Currently all parking spots at the annex are occupied either with post office vehicles or employee parking. There are no spots available for post office customers, and no plans to create such spots. Moving all customer traffic and parking to the strictly residential area would affect the residents' quality of life and would have a negative environmental impact. No environmental or traffic studies have been conducted to evaluate the possible effects on the residents. In addition, the Coastal Commission needs to approve the move, but the matter was not even brought up before the commission to this date.

According to several postal employees, the annex is currently extremely crowded with the sorting operations, and there is no space available to accommodate the postal service operations. Although \$400,000 has been allocated for remodeling of the annex, such a consolidation will result in crowded conditions that will not meet the standards of the community. Most likely the remodeling and relocation would end up costing a lot more than \$400,000.

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The community served by the VMPO is united and outspoken against the closure of the post office, which is a community landmark. The community supports moving the Venice sorting operations from the annex to the VMPO and sending the Marina del Rey and Playa del Rey sorting to their neighborhoods. The annex could then be sold for at least \$16 million, which is more than triple the amount the VMPO is currently on the market for. Because of the strong demands of the community for the preservation of the VMPO historic building as well as the public's access to the Biberman mural, the sale of the annex would be a much easier sale than that of the VMPO building.

In conclusion, the USPS did not carefully examine the effect of closing the VMPO on the community served (significant decrease in window service, increase in wait time, negative traffic and environmental effects on the residential area surrounding the annex). In addition, the USPS did not consider certain issues it is required to consider, such as bringing this matter before the Coastal Commission for approval. The prerogative that the USPS would make money off the sale of the VMPO is unsupported by substantial evidence on record because the USPS would make an additional \$11 million by selling the annex instead of the VMPO. In addition, remodeling the annex will cost a lot more than \$400,000 in order to meet the demands of the community it serves.

I look forward to working with postal office representatives to find a solution that accommodates the Venice community and allows us to continue supporting the USPS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Greta Cobar', written in a cursive style.

Greta Cobar

December 7, 2011